

COMINT and the PRC Intervention in the Korean War ~~(S-CCO)~~

"A RISK WE KNOWINGLY TOOK" (U)

(U) On 25 October 1950, four Chinese Communist armies suddenly attacked General Douglas MacArthur's command in the approaches to North Korea's border with the PRC. The United Nations units withdrew to defensive positions. When MacArthur resumed the march a month later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed him that members of the UN were concerned the offensive might develop into a "major clash" with the Chinese and produce a general war with China and the USSR. The JCS asked MacArthur whether, to reduce that danger, he could keep U.S. units away from the



Douglas MacArthur

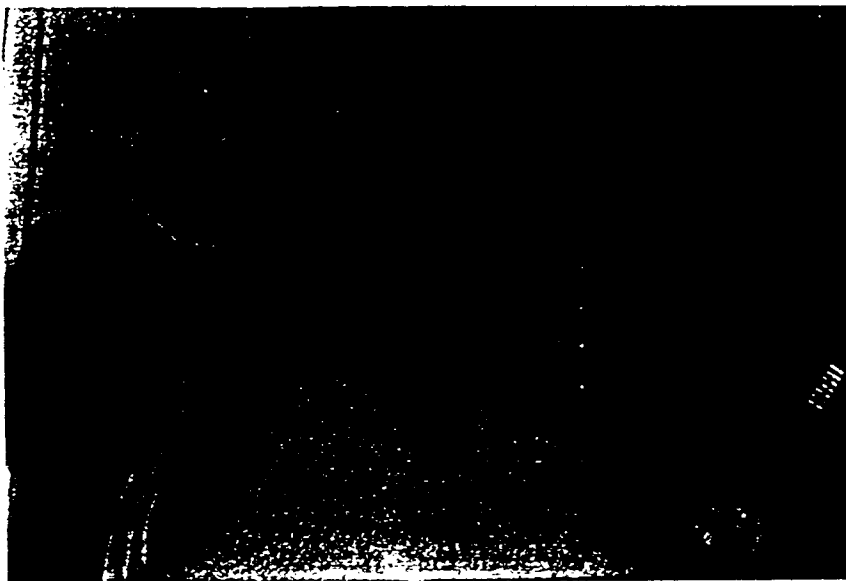
PRC boundary. MacArthur immediately denounced the idea. Any such change in his operational plan would be "a betrayal" of the Korean people, "appeasement of Communist aggression," and "a tribute to international lawlessness," MacArthur declared. He lectured the JCS that "the entry of Chinese Communists was a risk we knowingly took at the time we committed our forces."

(U) Nine PRC armies overwhelmed MacArthur's forces just two days later. Survivors of the first assaults saw long columns of Chinese troops moving past in the mountains to cut off retreat. MacArthur cabled the JCS that he was facing "an entirely new war."

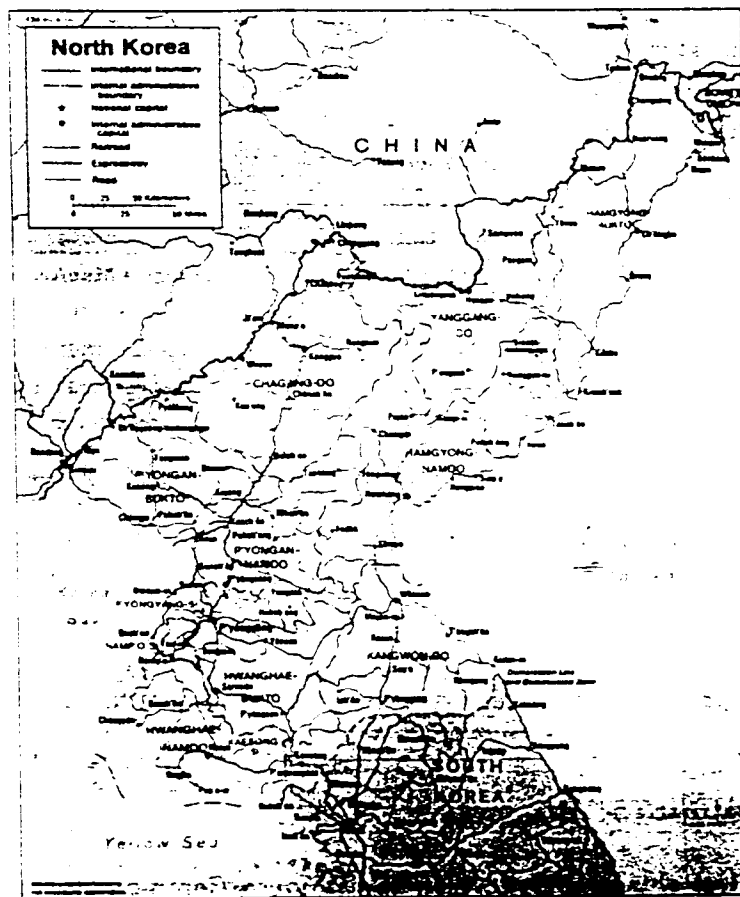
~~(S-CCO)~~ But Chinese Communist communications were not new to British and American cryptologists. No one who received COMINT product, including MacArthur's own G-2 in Tokyo, should have been surprised by the PRC intervention in the Korean War.

"GENUINE COMMUNISTS"? (U)

(U) The U.S. first obtained COMINT on the Chinese Communists from Japan's communications during the Second World War. The intercepts reported Communist



Joint Chiefs of Staff at Pentagon, November 1949



Map 1

military operations as well as the position Soviet officials took when discussing the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). For instance, Japanese ambassador Sato informed Tokyo on 4 January 1945 that Soviet foreign minister Molotov had stated during an interview:

Russia does not propose to interfere in Chinese affairs and does not support the Chinese Communists. It is true that there is a self-styled Communist Party and a Communist Army in China, but I personally doubt whether these persons are genuine Communists.

(U) Soviet leaders spoke as soothingly to American diplomats. Marshal Josef Stalin remarked to Ambassador W. Averell Harriman on 10 June 1944 that members of the Chinese Party were "margarine Communists," and Molotov said essentially the same to Messrs. Donald Nelson and Patrick J. Hurley on 31 August. Hurley, an Oklahoma land speculator and oilman, had traveled to Moscow before taking up an assignment as President Roosevelt's personal representative to the Nationalist government in Chongqing. After a year in China, he still believed Molotov. Hurley announced to reporters in Washington on 28 November 1945 that he had visited Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai at their headquarters in Yan'an and was convinced they weren't real Communists. "The only difference between Chinese Communists and Oklahoma Republicans is that the Oklahoma Republicans aren't armed," Hurley said.



Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai

(U) However the Soviets depicted them and Hurley perceived them, Chinese Communists did not hide their affiliation with Moscow. General George C. Marshall remarked to British visitors in December 1950 that he had a number of conferences with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in China in 1946. "Pictures of Stalin and Lenin were everywhere," and Zhou had emphasized that Chinese Communists were Marxists, not mere agrarian reformers. "They regarded the Russians as co-religionists. This feeling was thoroughly indoctrinated in their troops," Marshall stated.

"A STATE OF GRAVE CIVIL CONFLICT" (U)

(U) General Marshall's personal encounters with CCP leaders resulted from Washington's attempt to fashion a strong, united, and democratic China following World War II. President Truman in November 1945 named Marshall as his special envoy with the job of settling differences between the Communists and Nationalists.



George C. Marshall

~~(S CCO)~~ General Marshall established a framework for continued negotiations between the Communists and Nationalists, secured agreement for a cease fire, arranged for representatives of both sides to monitor the truce, and tried to mediate a permanent settlement. Before leaving Washington for Chongqing, he asked the Army's Intelligence Division to provide him COMINT support. The Army Security Agency (ASA) was already collecting [REDACTED] Nationalist traffic that provided commentary on China's internal situation, and it sent operators who quickly isolated communications between the Communist negotiators and Yan'an. The collection team moved to Nanjing when the Nationalist government and General Marshall's mission transferred there in May 1946, and ASA also established a new intercept station in Seoul, South Korea, to cover the Communist links.

~~(TSC)~~ [REDACTED] Unreliable electrical power in Nanjing and poor hearability in Seoul caused collection gaps, [REDACTED] General Marshall was impatient. An ASA officer related that in June 1946

We had to go up and explain to General Marshall what [ASA Headquarters] didn't want to put down on paper: [REDACTED]

~~(TSC)~~ Nevertheless ASA did produce COMINT that assisted General Marshall. [REDACTED] correspondence yielded [REDACTED] translations. A State Department official commented in the spring of 1947 that General Marshall had "a very great interest" in those messages.

~~(SC)~~ [REDACTED] Nationalist, and Communist communications revealed the two sides were determined to decide the future of the country by fighting rather than by

negotiating. In [REDACTED] 1946, the Communists specified why they refused to parley with the Nationalist (Kuomintang) government:



Map 2

1. The Kuomintang's unwillingness to cease warfare on all fronts and its insistence on occupying North China by force.
2. The Kuomintang's unwillingness to carry out the decision of the Political Consultative Council and its stubborn refusal to discuss political issues affecting areas which have not been occupied by force.
3. The Kuomintang's insistence on one-party government.
4. The Kuomintang's advocacy of military dictatorship.
5. The Kuomintang's failure to act on its promises.

~~(SC)~~ By late summer 1946 it was thus evident from COMINT that China's doors were closed to American mediation. General Marshall had become a powerless spectator of the bitter struggle between Communists and Nationalists and a casualty of the Soviet-American Cold War. Washington policymakers increasingly interpreted the strife in China as a battlefield of worldwide conflict with Moscow in which confrontation rather

than negotiation was the prime consideration. While General Marshall attempted to bring the two sides together, Soviet military forces occupying Manchuria strengthened the Communists. At the same time, the U.S. provided material and financial aid to the Nationalists. The Communists hated the United States for helping the Chiang Kai-shek regime. They charged [REDACTED] that "the reckless actions in which the Kuomintang has indulged and which have culminated in a state of grave civil conflict are a result of the mistaken policy of the American authorities in giving aid to Chiang [Kai-shek]." In early 1947 General Marshall returned to Washington to be secretary of state, the last Communist envoys departed for Yan'an, and the radio links that had provided intelligence on the Communist negotiating position pulled off the air.

MORE THAN A MILLION REGULAR TROOPS (U)



Carter W. Clarke

support. Venturing further, we can speculate that GC&CS translations might have reached Washington in time for Colonel Clarke to show them to General Marshall between 11 March and 18 April 1946, when Marshall visited the U.S. to report on his work in China.

~~(S-CCO)~~ In July 1946, GCHQ ended the special distribution to Colonel Clarke and began sending the Moscow-Yan'an translations to the U.S. with other Soviet product. Three months after General Marshall returned from China to be secretary of state, the State Department received translations of thirteen messages dated from 20 November 1945 to 17 March 1947 that GC&CS had published since January 1946. The State Department's Special Projects Staff (SPS), which was responsible for analyzing COMINT

and briefing State officials on the results, completed a study of the material on 21 April 1947.

~~(SC)~~ For the SPS, "nearly every message" implied "control or coordination from Moscow." The material furnished "authentic and concrete proof" of cooperation between Moscow and Yan'an in "propaganda and organization" and refuted "the repeated denials of organized connections between the [CCP] and the Soviet Government." Furthermore, an 18 March 1946 communication in which the CCP requested a loan of "1.5 to 2.5 million American dollars" for postwar propaganda expenses indicated Yan'an's "dependence . . . on Moscow for financial support."

~~(SC)~~ Earlier messages [REDACTED] by GC&CS both demonstrated the Chinese Communists were Marxist-Leninists linked closely to the Soviet Union and contained information that might have profited American diplomacy and intelligence operations. Yan'an described attempts to subvert Japanese soldiers during World War II and sought Soviet assistance in the contest with the Nationalists after the war ended. On 27 September 1945, Yan'an asked Moscow to airlift Chinese Communist troops to Japanese-occupied Manchuria, promising safe landing areas and "a great quantity of" captured gasoline. Chiang Kai-shek had already secured American help in the race for north China. In August and September 1945, the U.S. Army and Navy hastened to transfer Nationalist armies by air and by sea to accept the surrender of Japan's forces.

~~(SC)~~ Viewed down long years of retrospect, the British product suggested as well that the CCP was not Moscow's puppet. The messages had a tone of courteous formality. Yan'an informed Moscow of its political activities, its wars with the Nationalists, and the strength and composition of its army, but appeared to do so selectively and sparingly. The messages made clear that far from the guerrilla remnants that sought safety in Shaanxi province after the Long March of 1934-1935, the Communists possessed formidable military power at the end of World War II.

~~(SC)~~ Other than the indications that Colonel Clarke, possibly General Marshall, and members of the State Department's SPS saw some of the GC&CS translations, we have no information on the U.S. distribution. If China analysts at State and the Department of Army had access to the material, they ignored it when calculating the strength of the Communist army. In April 1945, Mao Zedong stated publicly that he had 900,000 regular troops. In early October 1945, a GC&CS intercept revealed Communist regular forces totaled 1,020,000; according to the message, the CCP intended to reorganize the formations into sixteen armies of three divisions each. Almost a year later, in mid-1946, the G-2, Department of the Army, carried only 600,000 regular troops in the Yan'an order of battle. In August 1947, the Department of State's Chinese Affairs Division estimated Communist forces numbered no more than 1,000,000 troops. In contrast, Mao Zedong stated on 25 December 1947 that Communist regulars totaled 2,000,000 - probably an accurate figure given the indication of a progression in strength between April and October 1945. The American tendency to underrate PRC military power would persist

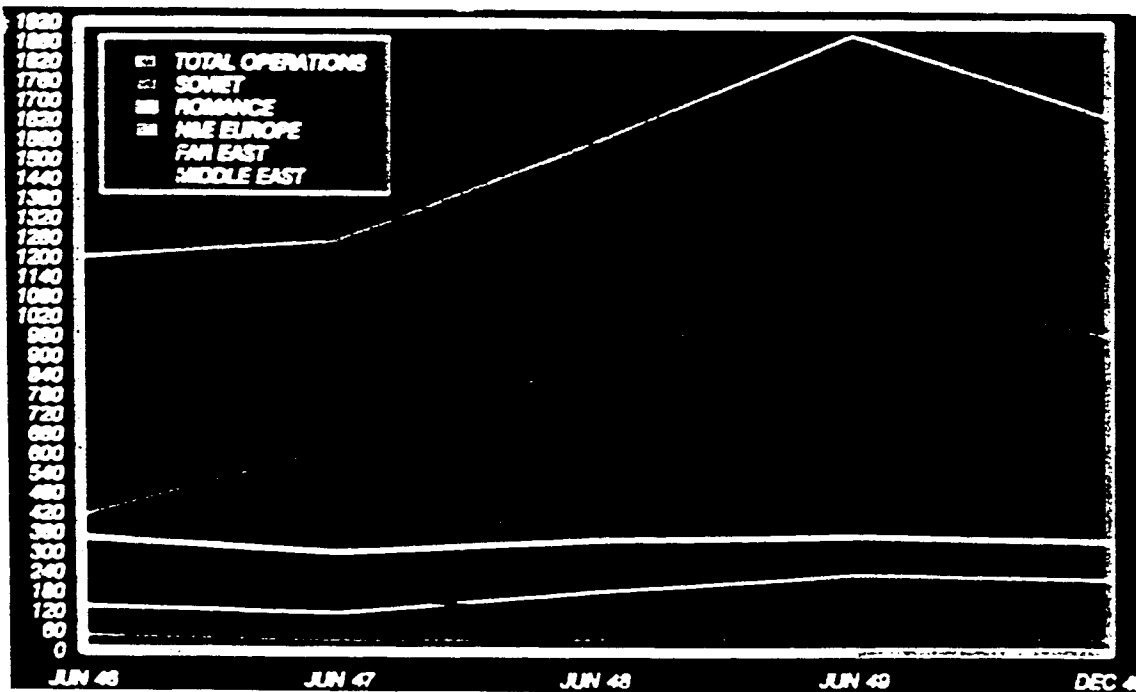
with harmful effect through the fall and winter of 1950, when it fell to commanders and intelligence officers to assess China's ability to intervene in the Korean War.

(S-CCO) But minimizing the importance of the Chinese Communists was not confined to COMINT customers. During the endeavor to support the Marshall mission, ASA traffic analysts isolated what they called a "rather extensive network" that possibly served the Communists in north China and Manchuria. The complex passed a great deal of traffic, but ASA could intercept few messages because of the primary need to collect communications of the Communist negotiators. When the links supporting the negotiators disappeared, ASA dropped the radio groups in north China and Manchuria because of pressure to put every possible position on Soviet targets.

REDUCED RESOURCES; [REDACTED]

1947-1949 (U)

(S-CCO) Thereafter the COMINT effort on the Chinese Communists suffered not only reduced collection but also cutbacks in analysis. The accompanying chart depicts combined ASA and Navy, and, beginning in November 1949, the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA) people assigned to various problems. Note that Far East targets were the only ones that took significant personnel losses during this period, declining from 261 in June 1946 to 112 in December 1949. Most of the work on the Far East concentrated on Chinese Nationalist targets.



Personnel allocations, June 1946-Dec 1949

~~(S CCO)~~ American anxiety over security obstructed development of Communist military communications as well. [REDACTED] the U.S. Communications Intelligence Board (USCIB)

RENEWED EMPHASIS; PRODUCT REPORTING AND DISTRIBUTION, 1950 (U)

~~(S CCO)~~ When Communist armies destroyed Nationalist forces in Manchuria and pushed into central and south China in 1948 and 1949, GCHQ and American customers began pressing for better COMINT coverage of the Communists. In those days most U.S. intelligence officers believed the Soviet Union controlled Communist movements wherever located. The agencies estimated Moscow was preparing for war with the West and would be ready for a showdown sometime in 1950. Before then the Soviets would start local conflicts. When the People's Republic of China (PRC) was formally established on 1 October 1949, the intelligence agencies regarded the new state as an extension of Soviet power. [REDACTED]

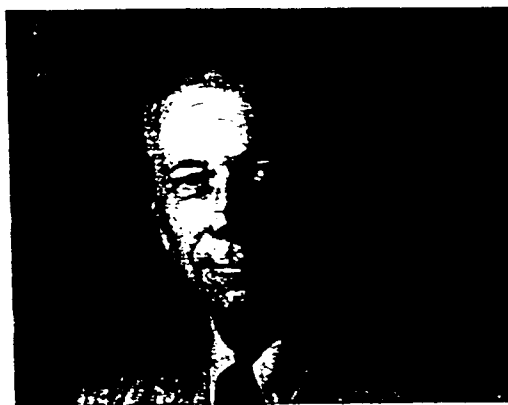
~~(TSC)~~ In March 1950, USCIB stressed that increasing the COMINT effort on the PRC was of "extraordinary importance." Because AFSA had only enough resources for a token search and development of military communications, USCIB authorized more people, more collection positions, and a new site, [REDACTED] all to be dedicated solely to the PRC problem. But even though the resources came rapidly after that, and AFSA shifted people to the PRC from other targets, it would not be until 1952 that traffic analysts could detect from military communications when PRC units entered and left Korea. [REDACTED]

~~(S CCO)~~ Yet AFSA and GCHQ did produce predictive COMINT on the PRC intervention in the Korean War. That achievement was due to uninterrupted work on [REDACTED] Chinese plaintext civil communications by a few linguists and reporters - five to six at ASA and then AFSA during the late 40s, eight to twelve when the Korean War began, including Mr. Norman Wild, Mr. Robert E. Drake, and Mr. Milton Zaslow, who was the chief of the section.

~~(S CCO)~~ ASA and GCHQ collected Chinese civil communications after World War II and continued to do so after the Communists seized power. The messages were numerous, ranging from personal greetings and announcements of family events to official



Milton Zaslow



Robert Drake

government reports. Mr. Zaslow established a system in which the best linguists scanned the messages first, then assigned them to subject-matter translators and reporters. [REDACTED] The effort yielded intelligence on the PRC economy, transportation and logistics, and the positions of military units. [REDACTED]

~~(S CCO)~~ Reporting departed from custom. Zaslow recently recalled:

AFSA was considered to be a technical agency [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Only 'professional intelligence officers' in customer organizations were supposed to be qualified to evaluate the information and discuss it with commanders and policymakers. [REDACTED]

Notwithstanding this conception, Zaslow and his associates knew the agencies could not always discern what was occurring by reading individual translations. On occasion they thus covered complex developments by writing reports based on many messages.

~~(S CCO)~~ AFSA transmitted its product and the GCHQ reports electrically to customers in Washington as well as overseas. [REDACTED] The standard recipients of Chinese Communist product were the State Department's Special Projects Staff, CIA, Navy, the Army G-2, Air Force, GCHQ, the British Liaison Office, and ASA Pacific HQ, located in Tokyo. The latter and the Army's G-2 distributed the reports to MacArthur's staff. The intelligence agencies republished the COMINT in their own summaries, and two groups responsible for assessing international events – the Watch Committee chaired by CIA and the Joint Intelligence Indications Committee chaired by the Army's G-2 – gisted the COMINT product as well. Agencies relied on COMINT and credited it with statements such as "communications intelligence reported" this or "a message stated that. . . ." They frequently referred to collateral as "unconfirmed information." The agencies distributed both COMINT and non-COMINT versions of their summaries and estimates. For example, CIA produced intelligence memoranda and National Intelligence Estimates at the Secret

level as well as a Top Secret Codeword Situation Summary that contained all-source intelligence. The Joint Intelligence Indications Committee published both codeword and noncodeword reports of its weekly deliberations. The agencies and committees distributed their publications to the president, the secretaries of state, defense, and military departments, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and major headquarters including General MacArthur's Far East Command in Tokyo.

(U) Intelligence assessments on developments in the Far East of that time portended a general war with the Soviet Union: the proclamation of the PRC in October 1949, the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance in February 1950, Beijing's apparent determination to attack Taiwan, and China's advancement of Viet Minh aspirations against French colonial rule in Indo-China constituted Moscow's opening moves toward a critical confrontation with the West. As a result, COMINT professionals began to notice major changes in the dispositions of PRC main force units in the spring of 1950.

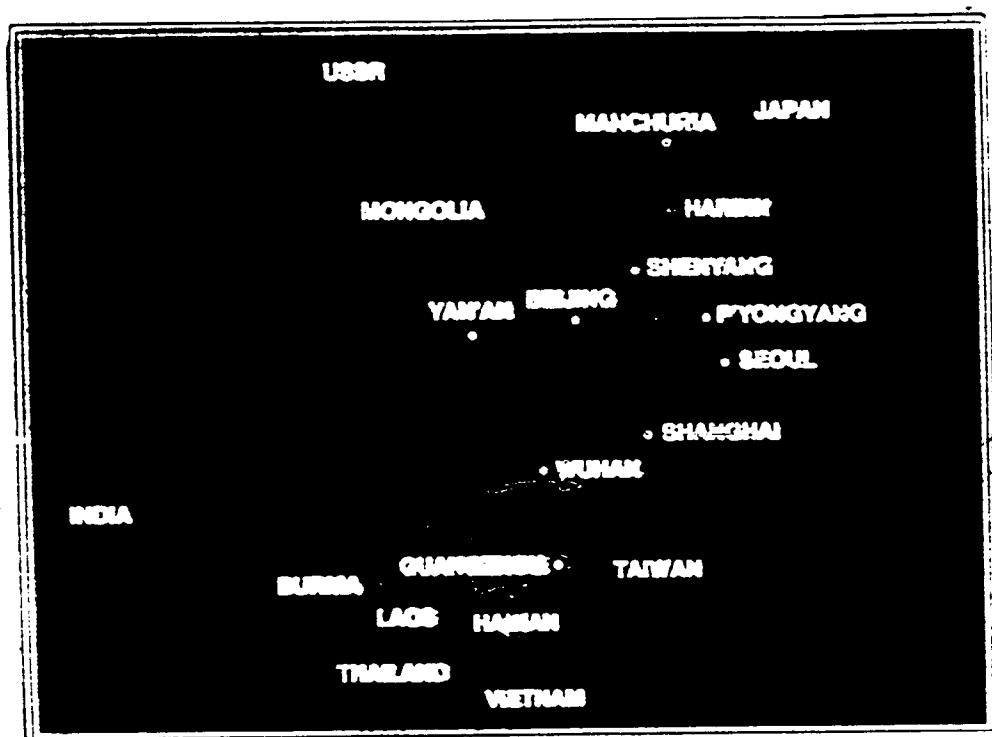
COMINT DETECTS FORCES MOVING TO KOREAN BORDER, MARCH-OCTOBER 1950 ~~SECRET~~

~~(SC)~~ As shown on Map 3, AFSA reported in May and June that some 70,000 PRC troops from two army groups were moving down the Yangtze River in ships toward Wuhan.

~~(SC)~~ On 17 July, based on [REDACTED] civil messages, AFSA reported that the Fourth Field Army, which the Army G-2 at the Pentagon considered China's best combat force, might be preparing for an operation against Taiwan or be moving to Manchuria. Some of the units had moved east, but others deployed northward just before the North Korean invasion on 25 June. An element of the 40th Army relocated from Guangxi in south China to north-central Manchuria between 17 April and 12 June. On 31 May, an element of another army, the 39th, was addressed north of Wuhan on the rail line leading to Manchuria. (Map 4)

~~(SC)~~ The Army G-2 believed AFSA's 17 July report meant the Fourth Field Army was going to invade Taiwan. The Watch Committee expressed the opinion that the "concentration of Chinese Communist troops in Manchuria might be intended for use in Korea," although "there was no indication as to when or under what circumstances they might be committed."

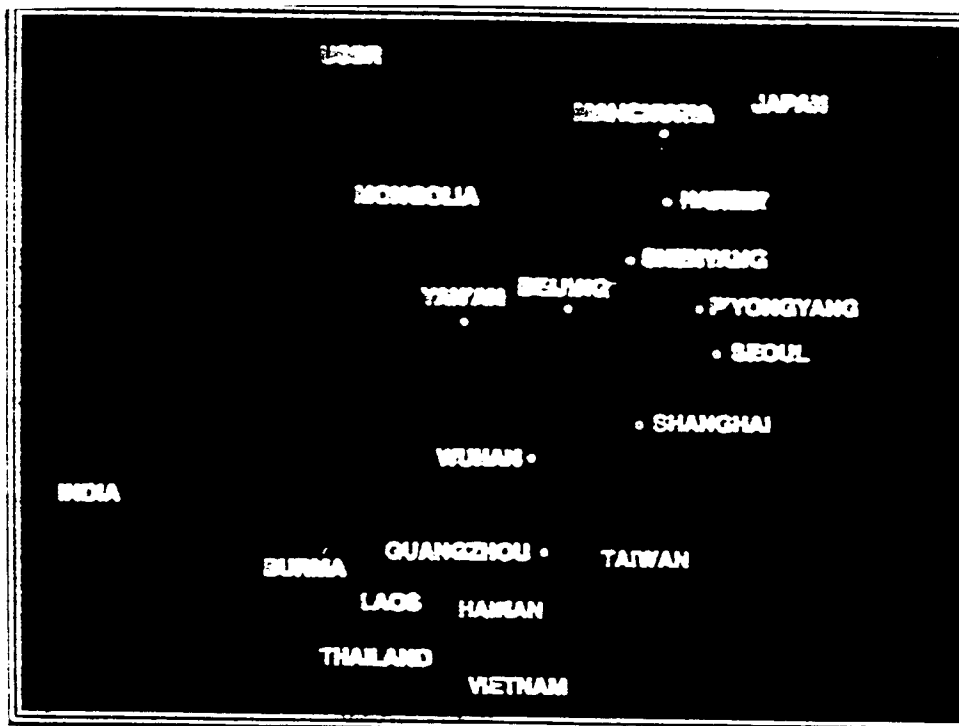
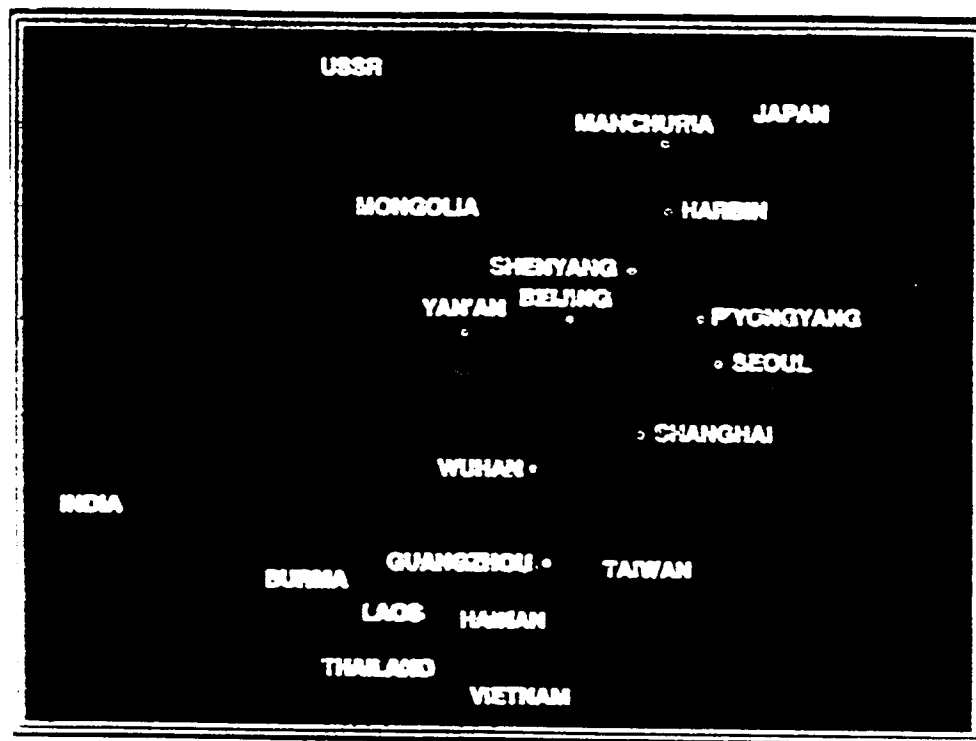
~~(SC)~~ On 1 September, AFSA published a follow-up based on [REDACTED] more messages. Beijing had continued to transfer main force units to Manchuria after the North Korean invasion. A major command HQ, the 13th Army Group, relocated from Guangzhou in the south to Dandong on the Sino-Korean border between 19 and 26 August; an element of an additional army, the 42nd, deployed to northwestern Manchuria by 24 July; and units belonging to still another army, the 38th, were addressed north of Wuhan on the rail line



Map 3 - March and April: PLA army groups moving



Map 4 - 17 July: 4th field army operation intended in Taiwan or Manchuria



Map 6 - 2-4, 21 October: PLA massing on border; 3rd Field Army sending units

to Manchuria in late June and late July. As represented by the dotted lines on Map 5, the G-2 and CIA concluded that both the 38th and 39th Armies were en route to Manchuria when COMINT detected them at stations along the railroad.

~~(SC)~~ The 1 September report also stated that a new artillery division had been referenced on the same rail line north of Wuhan on 24 August. And in Manchuria, messages referred in June and August to new combat formations south and east of Shenyang - the 55th and 57th Armies, which CIA believed to be former local defense forces that the People's Liberation Army had upgraded to main force units.

~~(SC)~~ The intelligence agencies decided in September that the PRC had postponed the invasion of Taiwan and intended to give some form of armed assistance to the North Koreans in the immediate future. On 22 September, the Watch Committee agreed that the PRC could move into Korea "with little advance notice."

~~(TSC)~~ During the first three weeks of October, COMINT revealed that the deployments had changed. Units that had deployed to central and western Manchuria or to rail centers from which they could advance quickly to Manchuria, now moved up to join the 13th Army Group HQ on the Sino-Korean border. As shown on Map 6, the 39th Army - last seen north of Wuhan - was referenced on 6 September at Liaoyang, about 100 miles from the border. By 28 September, an element of the 42nd Army, last noted in northwest Manchuria, moved to Tonghua, within fifty miles of the frontier. Moreover, the 118th Infantry Division, 40th Army, had been addressed at Dandong on the 5th. On 23 October, AFSA reported the entire army might have moved to Dandong. The agencies, however, did not carry the relocation of the 40th Army until early November.

~~(TSC)~~ A massive new deployment was also under way. AFSA published a 21 October [redacted] that twenty troop trains were heading toward Manchuria from Shanghai in the Third Field Army's area of responsibility.

MORE WARNING BEFORE THE 25 OCTOBER "FIRST PHASE OFFENSIVE" (U)

~~(TSC)~~ Other COMINT gave dimension and purpose to the military deployments. In an intercepted message, [redacted] in Beijing informed [redacted] on 25 September that, based on a conversation he had had with Zhou Enlai, he believed the PRC would intervene if the UN crossed the 38th parallel into North Korea. Collateral confirmed Zhou Enlai had warned the Dutch and Indian envoys on 3 October that the PRC would send troops into Korea if U.S. forces entered territory above the 38th parallel. PRC civil communications from 10 September to 15 October revealed the military had taken over railroads to the extent that goods could not be shipped to consumers between Shanghai and Manchuria. North Korean military communications mentioned a "regiment that came from China" on 27 September. Furthermore, a 6 October message stated that a shipload of medical supplies had been sent to Dalian and Dandong near the Sino-Korean border.

—(TSC) But when the UN landed successfully at Inchon on 15 September and drove the North Koreans across the 38th parallel without interference from the PRC, the agencies supposed that Beijing had missed the opportunity to intervene. Intelligence officers backed away from their earlier warning. They overlooked the new pattern of military deployments to the Sino-Korean frontier, and minimized or found alternative explanations for other indicators. Although CIA believed the railroad tie-ups in East China signified "considerable northward military movement," the Joint Intelligence Indications Committee attributed the congestion to a wreck farther up the line. The agencies were inclined to think the soldiers observed in trains bound for the north were not from the Third Field Army as the French attaché had reported, but rather were Fourth Field Army troops whose units had already moved to Manchuria. Moreover, the "regiment that came from China" might have been North Koreans from Manchuria. As for Zhou Enlai's warnings, Zhou could have been using [REDACTED] as conduits to discourage the UN from entering North Korea. The medical supplies might not have been intended for Chinese Communist troops in Manchuria, but for the North Koreans or even the Soviets. Finally, the agencies bickered over the strength of the PRC units, with CIA analysts tending to think that a COMINT reference to an army element meant the army had moved intact and military intelligence officers beginning to doubt that entire armies had relocated. COMINT had not furnished "irrefutable evidence that all components of these various army groups are in Manchuria, but only portions of them are," the Joint Intelligence Indications Committee argued on 4 October. The G-2 concluded on 4 October that although China's entry was not "wholly to be discounted," the evidence was insufficient to indicate such a development was "either highly probable or imminent." On 5 October, the Watch Committee ventured that even though the PRC did have a large force on the border, intervention was "less likely" than previously because Beijing's propaganda supporting North Korea had diminished and the PRC leadership probably did not want to expose China to retaliatory U.S. air strikes.

(U) President Truman was still concerned. In his later account of events preceding the PRC intervention, he wrote that Zhou Enlai's threats motivated him to meet with MacArthur. "I wanted to get the benefit of his firsthand information and judgement," President Truman explained. When he and MacArthur convened on Wake Island on 15 October, the president repeatedly voiced his apprehension that the Chinese might intervene. "I have been worried about that," he was quoted as saying. "What are the chances for Chinese interference?" the president asked MacArthur. "Very little," MacArthur replied. "Had they intervened in the first or



President Truman

second months it would have been decisive. We are no longer fearful of their intervention.

(U) None of the other participants - W. Averell Harriman, the presidential adviser; Philip C. Jessup, ambassador at large; Dean Rusk, assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern Affairs; John Muccio, U.S. ambassador to South Korea; Frank Pace, secretary of the army; General Omar Bradley, chairman of the JCS; Admiral Arthur W. Radford, CINCPACFLT - apparently questioned the General's assessment.

~~(SC)~~ Yet after the Wake Island conference, COMINT detected increased activity in PRC air communications and new Soviet air patrols along the Korean border. PHOTINT showed seventy-five to one hundred fighters at Dandong airfield, and a HUMINT source reported PRC leaders had decided to take military action in North Korea. The Watch Committee now assessed that the Chinese might indeed intervene soon, but only for a defensive purpose such as occupation of a strip of territory along the Yalu to protect hydro-electric facilities.

THE "FIRST PHASE" ATTACKS (U)

(U) On 25 October, the armies that AFSA and GCHQ had reported moving to Manchuria struck UN forces advancing toward the Yalu. The U.S. Marines consolidated their positions in eastern North Korea, and the Eighth Army pulled back to the Ch'ong'chon River in the west (see Map 7).



Map 7

~~(SC)~~ On 6 November, the Chinese broke off this First Phase Offensive and withdrew into the mountains facing the UN positions. During a meeting of the Joint Indications Intelligence Committee on 15 November, agency representatives puzzled over the "lack of aggressiveness" on the part of the PRC forces. The intelligence officers who thought only elements of armies had deployed to Manchuria now used the same reasoning to estimate how many troops took part in the First Phase Offensive. Actually about 120,000 had attacked in four armies; but the Watch Committee believed the Chinese had made only "piecemeal commitments of small forces . . . from various divisions of three different armies." The committee reasoned the PRC wanted to promote "the fiction of volunteer forces but also . . . to create the impression of greater strength than was actually present." Major General Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's G-2, thought only battalion-size elements had intervened. Asked why the Chinese had been able to destroy a U.S. regiment in late October, Willoughby said the unit had not taken precautions against a night attack.

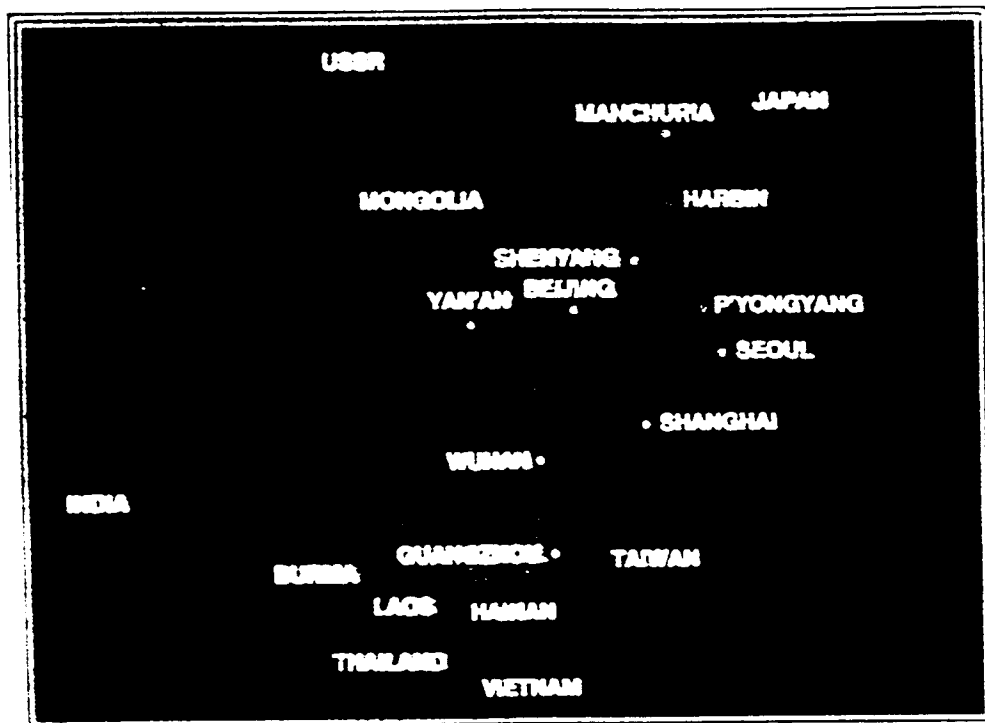
COMINT INDICATORS OF MASSIVE INTERVENTION ~~(SC)~~

~~(SC)~~ During the month between the PRC First Phase attacks on 25 October and the Second Phase Offensive that began 26 November, AFSA reported Beijing was moving three more armies to the Korean border and making extensive preparations for war. On 6 November, a North Korean message mentioned that a PRC "55th Force" had been nearby during the recent battle with U.S. elements. As already told, the PRC 55th Army was created from local defense forces in Manchuria during the previous summer. In addition, two more armies from central and eastern China joined the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 42nd Armies that had engaged UN forces in the First Phase Offensive. The 50th Army was in the process of moving from Wuhan to Liaoyuan in mid-October, and the 66th Army relocated from Shanghai to Dandong by 26 November (see Map 8).

~~(TSC)~~ The troops [REDACTED] had observed heading for Manchuria on 21 October had not yet been committed to action in Korea. In partial confirmation of the [REDACTED] message, CIA on 24 November cited collateral indicating an army group headquarters and two armies from the Third Field Army had arrived in Manchuria.

~~(TSC)~~ GCHQ and AFSA reported that these new deployments were attended by preparations for war. The Fourth Field Army and the PRC Air Force moved rear services headquarters to Manchuria on 28 October and 5 November, respectively.

[REDACTED] - now the Chinese and Soviets received [REDACTED] at the same time. [REDACTED] communications revealed during the first three weeks of November that Beijing was in a state of emergency, with authorities sponsoring mass demonstrations demanding intervention, imposing more stringent censorship, improving air defense, and



Map 8

1, 6, 10, 26 November: PLA "35th Force" in Korea: three more armies on border

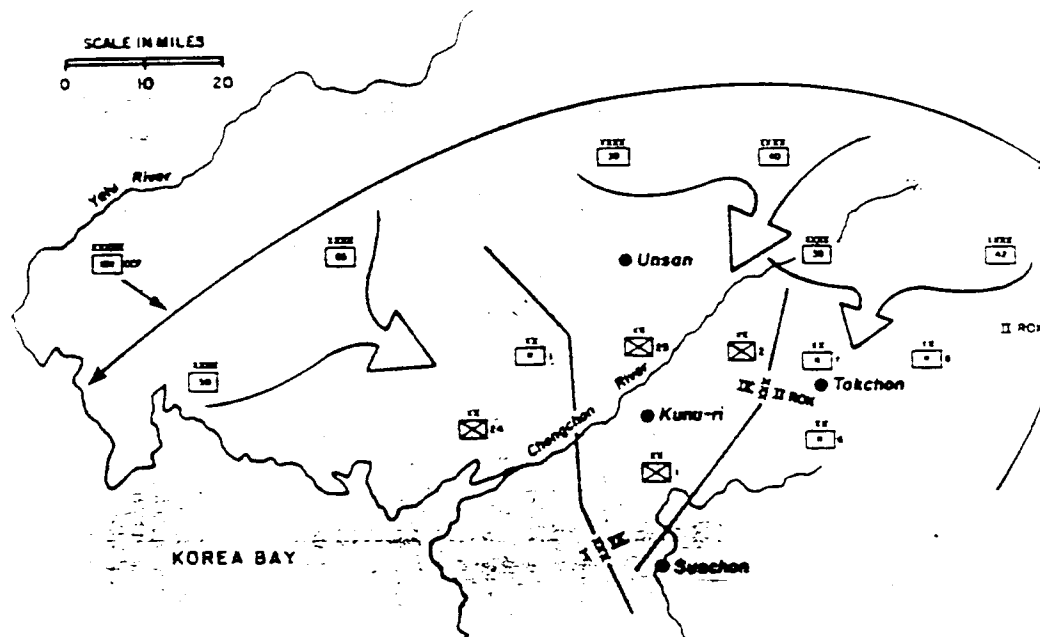
commanding that any soldier or officer could volunteer to serve in Korea. On 12 November, the medical HQ of the Fourth Field Army urgently ordered PRC troops in Manchuria to receive immunizations for diseases that were prevalent in North Korea - smallpox, cholera, and typhoid fever.

~~SC~~ Furthermore, coincident with a North Korean message stating that PRC reinforcements were expected in northeast North Korea, PRC civil communications between 9 and 22 November disclosed an organization in Shanghai sending a total of 30,000 maps of Korea to cities on the Sino-Korean border. The first of the messages stated that Shanghai was sending at least 10,000 maps to Shenyang. The Army G-2 reacted to this report with an estimate that the PRC might allocate about 1,000 maps to a division. The G-2 granted that the 10,000 maps might have been for ten divisions but thought it more likely the maps were intended for the 75,000 Chinese "volunteers" General Willoughby's staff thought to be in North Korea. But on 18 November, Shanghai stated that 20,000 maps of Korea had been sent to Shenyang. And on the 22nd, a message disclosed 30,000 were on the way. According to the original G-2 calculation, 30,000 maps would be enough for thirty divisions. On 26 November, the PRC launched the Second Phase Offensive with thirty divisions.

~~SC~~ The agencies now began to accept the COMINT evidence that the Chinese were preparing to strike a heavy blow. The Watch Committee judged on 2 November that the Chinese might raise the scale of their involvement, but it still believed the preparations

had primarily defensive purposes such as preventing North Korea's resistance from collapsing, controlling installations on the border, preserving a base of operations for Korean guerrillas, and tying down UN forces that otherwise might be deployed to deal with crises elsewhere in the world. After more COMINT accumulated, the Watch Committee warned on 16 November that the PRC intended "to expand the scale of intervention." On 22 November, the Joint Intelligence Indications Committee estimated that the PRC planned to take "extensive action of some sort . . . over a period of time."

(TSC) On 24 November, MacArthur's command resumed the advance to the Yalu in the western sector only to be thrown back by six PRC armies (Map 9). Three more armies attacked the First Marine Division and an Army regimental combat team in the area around the Chosin Reservoir. Those forces were from the area where had seen troop trains moving to Manchuria on 21 October. As Map 10 shows, collateral later reported that one of these armies, the 20th, crossed over into Korea with four divisions at Jjian, China. COMINT had detected that 5,000 maps of Korea were sent to Jjian a week before the massive offensive.



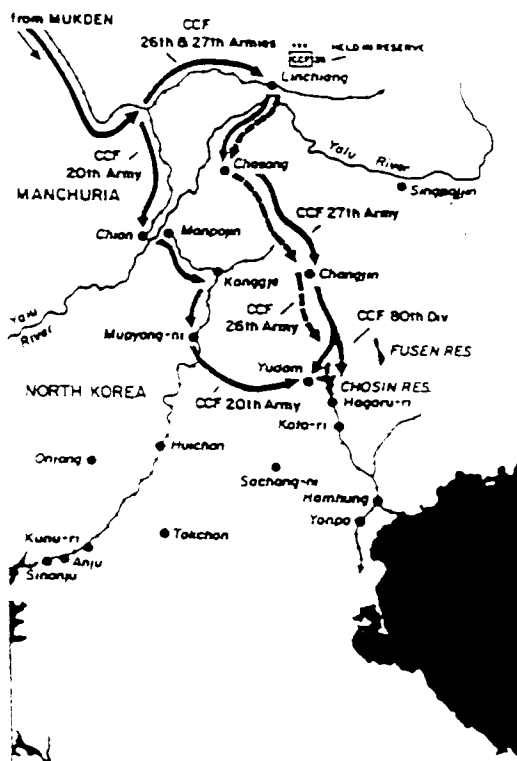
Map 9

The CCF XIII Army Group's deployment against Eighth Army, 24 November 1950

LEGACIES (U)

(S-CCO) COMINT provided timely and specific intelligence before the PRC intervention. We must praise AFSA and GCHQ for establishing that analysis is not the exclusive province of customers. We must also commend operational managers for retaining

coverage of [REDACTED] China's civil network despite pressure to work on Soviet targets.



Map 10

~~(S-CCO)~~ Yet ASA should not have dropped Chinese Communist military communications in 1946. As a result, net reconstruction was delayed. It is of course easier to make this observation than it would have been for ASA to obtain the resources for such a large effort in 1946. Nevertheless, ASA's 1946 failure to continue targeting the communications of a target of such rising importance as the Chinese Communist movement was an example of what to avoid in the future.

~~(S-CCO)~~ As for the intelligence agencies, their analysts were too prone to transfer western political-military presuppositions into the minds of the planners in Beijing. Even so, they did pay attention to COMINT and warned, however tentatively, that the Chinese would intervene.

(U) Why then did American leaders sanction the advance to the Yalu?

(U) According to recently available material from the PRC, Mao Zedong was convinced MacArthur was too arrogant and complacent to make an objective assessment of the intelligence he received. Mao reportedly thought the PRC could surprise MacArthur

because MacArthur would miscalculate Beijing's intentions. Mao allegedly also knew MacArthur had underestimated the PRC units opposing the UN. According to the recent information, Mao told the commander of the Thirteenth Army Group on 18 November that MacArthur believed there were only 60,000 to 70,000 PRC troops in North Korea. By then there were actually 260,000. Mao is said to have commented that this misconception would help the PRC destroy "tens of thousands" in MacArthur's army.

(U) MacArthur was not the only official who miscalculated. Dean Rusk would state forty years later that "the real failure at the Wake Island meeting was in our assessment of Chinese intentions and of our ability to handle Chinese forces if they actually intervened. On this one MacArthur and the rest of us were all wrong."

~~SECRET~~ But faulty estimates of the PRC and the UN do not fully explain what occurred. For all Mr. Rusk's remorse, the president and his advisers had decided to use force in Korea because they perceived the war as a Soviet test of Western resolve. Their mistake was not that they decided to respond militarily but that they put MacArthur in charge.

(U) Surely having in mind the COMINT reports of armies deploying to Manchuria, they ordered him in late September to "continue to make special efforts to determine whether there is a Chinese Communist or Soviet threat." But during the Second World War MacArthur had disregarded COMINT that contradicted his plans. Although we lack evidence that he personally read the reports of PRC preparations, it is clear that his headquarters in Tokyo received the information. MacArthur's zeal to pursue "betrayal," "appeasement," and "international lawlessness" to the Yalu probably caused him to minimize the COMINT indicators of massive PRC intervention, just as he had earlier minimized "inconvenient" COMINT reports about the Japanese. He thus drove his command to great defeat in Korea. Beijing's measure of the man had been terribly accurate. Washington's terribly flawed.

